

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending in the application and subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

The Examiner requires Applicants to restrict the application to one of the following inventions:

- I. Group I, Claims 1-6, drawn to a coated particle;
- II. Group II, Claims 7-9 and 11-15, drawn to a sintering method;
- III. Group II, claim 10, drawn to a product made of sintered coated particles.

In response Applicants elect Group I.

According to the Examiner, the Groups are separate inventions because they lack the same or corresponding technical feature.

Applicants respectfully **traverse**.

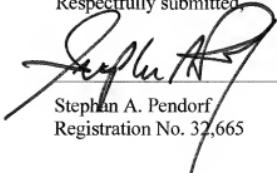
The invention addresses a problem in selective laser sintering (SLS). Within the building space, certain regions - depending on the geometry of the component to be produced - are heated for a longer or shorter period of time by the laser beam, whereas other regions are not heated at all. Moreover, only in each case the top particle layer is heated by the laser, whereas the lower layers release the heat which they absorb to the area surrounding them and cool down. This leads to inhomogeneous temperature distributions and thermal stresses within the particle cake, which can lead to component distortion.

The present invention solves the problem not by coating particles, which is known, but by reducing the absolute temperature difference between the irradiated regions and their finishing temperature, i.e. room temperature, through the use of suitable materials, i.e., those which have a softening point of lower than approximately 70°C.

All claims are linked by the requirement that the coating have a softening point of lower than approximately 70°C. Thus, all claims are linked by a common inventive feature.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required at any time during the prosecution of this application without specific authorization, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 16-0877.

Respectfully submitted,



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